

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY

JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

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STREET TREES OF SYDNEY

The narrow streets of the City of Sydney are distinguished from other Australian cities by their irregularity; a powerful reminder of the lack of planning in the early days of colonisation. Likewise street tree plantings in the City of Sydney have never been properly planned. Indeed, very few trees were planted in the streets until the last few decades. Prior to this tree planting was mostly restricted to such areas as the Botanic Gardens, parks and cemeteries. The photograph below, taken in the 1870s, shows two of the Stone Pines (*Pinus pinea*) that once lined the Bridge Street approach to the first Government House. These pines, long since removed, were perhaps the earliest avenue plantings in Australia.

Fortunately the Sydney City Council is taking steps to develop a street tree masterplan with comprehensive planting and maintenance guidelines for the city. The first stage of this project, now completed, was to assess each

street tree, of which there are almost 3000 in the city area. It was found that over 40% of these trees were planes (*Platanus* sp.). Such a monoculture does not contribute to interest or variety in the streetscapes of Sydney and increases the risk of major tree loss if a disease specific to plane trees were to be introduced.

The masterplan will explore a broader palette of tree species and look at a system of precinct identification through street trees. This approach will have positive implications for the historic areas of Sydney where species appropriate to the historic urban character will be used. Street trees that deserve greater use in Sydney include *Flindersia australis* (Australian teak), *Koelreuteria paniculata* (Chinese lantern tree), *Celtis australis* (Hackberry), and Figs (where space permits and appropriate root restraints are used). Even Stone Pines may once again come into vogue!

David Beaver



EDITORIAL

Tenth Anniversary

29 March 1990 marked the tenth anniversary of the Australian Garden History Society. On that day in 1980 a group of 100 garden owners, historians, gardeners, architects, landscape architects and government officers met at the National Trust property Illawarra in Melbourne. They unanimously passed a resolution to form a society with broad aims related to garden history. Those assembled had just attended the first Australian garden history conference and all present sensed a spirit of excitement and potential in this relatively new field. Studies of Australia's historic gardens had recently been completed by Peter Watts, Oline Richards, Tony Whitehill, Brian Morley, James Broadbent, Richard Jones, Phyl Simons and Chris Betteridge — all people who were to be instrumental in forming the AGHS and guiding its first decade. As well, Howard Tanner's excellent exhibition *Converting the Wilderness* had been touring Australia's major art galleries, introducing thousands to a rich and almost unknown heritage of Australia's historic gardens.

The spirit established by the founding of the AGHS was continued with a succession of annual conferences which acted as a showcase for many historic gardens and talented lecturers. State branches were formed across Australia and so the national momentum was continued at a local level. Yet a rapid rise of membership in the late 1980s coincided with an increased emphasis on horticulture in annual conferences, often at the expense of the society's original broad aims. As Ralph Neale remarked in *Landscape Australia* (1/89) 'a daylong programme of serious lectures was previously considered to be beyond their capacity'. Yet such sentiments were completely dispelled by the ninth annual conference, held in Melbourne in 1988. Well over 250 delegates sat engrossed as speakers addressed the theme 'Open to view: historic gardens and the public'. Keynote speaker John Sales, Principal Gardens Adviser to the English and Welsh National Trusts, highlighted the diversity of opinion between those wedded to 'fine gardening' and those with a serious interest in the conservation of historic gardens. Anne Latreille (*Age*, 20 February 1990) recently summarised the position when she asked the following rhetorical questions:

In the numerically limited arena of Australia, will any garden-based society whose horticultural interests are confined to 'fostering the preservation of earlier plant varieties' succeed in attracting enough members to thrive? Or will increased concentration on the study and protection of historic gardens sharpen the focus of the society, giving it added momentum and political clout?

Your National Management Committee firmly believes the latter is true.

National Management Committee

The AGHS wishes to thank the Urban Design Branch of the Melbourne City Council for use of their word processing facilities to publish this edition of the journal.

This issue, as well as celebrating the tenth anniversary of the AGHS, focuses on Edwardian gardens. Marilyn McBriar's feature article has been reprinted from one of the society's earliest publications, the second issue of the short-lived *Journal of the Australian Garden History Society* (Winter 1981). As only a small number of that issue was ever published, we now take advantage of the greatly expanded readership of *Australian Garden History* and the facility to reproduce suitable illustrations to accompany the article. This article has provided a solid framework which Trevor Nottle has used as a basis to explore the flowers found in Australia's Edwardian gardens. Hands up those who can identify the mysterious 'E.V.B.' mentioned in the article. And hands up also those readers who would admit to growing 'Bonfire' salvias in their garden. Yet, as Trevor Nottle demonstrates, such varieties were prized favourites in the Edwardian garden, strongly recommended by the redoubtable Mrs Arthur Tuckett. The day may soon come when 'Bonfire' salvias challenge clipped box and standard cumquats in gardens of the fashion conscious. In the meantime, keep a close watch on your nearest 'designer' nursery for further developments.

Richard Aitken and Georgina Whitehead

LETTERS

4 April 1990

I would like to 'sing the praises' of our untiring Chairman, Mrs Jocelyn Mitchell; a source of inspiration to us all. During the recent period of change within the AGHS her task cannot have been an easy one, however she has continued to carry it out diligently. The society is, to my mind, indeed fortunate to have at its helm such an efficient and responsible person. Taking into account the original aims of the AGHS one could say Jocelyn Mitchell 'leads by example'; particular evidence of this can be seen at Mawalok where the preservation of a significant and indeed historic garden and the preservation and propagation of earlier plant varieties are being carried out effectively. Mrs Jocelyn Mitchell's efforts are to be commended.

*Mrs Lyn Retief
Wagga Wagga*

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OUR NEW PATRON

Joan Law-Smith

The inaugural conference that led to the formation of the Australian Garden History Society in 1980 was a most exciting event. Here at last was a forum where gardeners, designers and historians were meeting to discuss and reflect on some of the landscapes created in Australia since European settlement. Since that first conference there have been significant changes to the way we have come to view our garden heritage and among these has been the recognition of gardens which, whilst not historic in the sense of having been established in the nineteenth century, are nevertheless among the most important landmarks in the development of gardening in twentieth century Australia. An important strand in the rope of garden history has been the influence of individual gardeners. In some cases these have been designers but in many cases they have been owner-designers who, through their gardens or in their writing, have influenced a generation of gardeners.

Joan Law-Smith through her garden, Bolobek, her painting and her writing has been and is a continuing influence on gardeners in Australia. Much has been written about the garden at Bolobek, about its formality and gentleness, its concentration on colour combinations and the relationship of plants to each other. All of these elements combine to give the garden a quality which raise it to the much overworked and rather unattractive epithet 'great'. A preferable description might be 'a garden of quality' or, to borrow the title of one of Lady Law-Smith's own books, *An Uncommon Garden*.

Joan Law-Smith, who since Dame Elisabeth Murdoch's retirement has agreed to act as patron of the Australian Garden History Society, should be no stranger to members. She has attended a number of conferences and opened Bolobek for the society. Few of those who have

met her will have failed to be aware of her gentleness and her extraordinary sense of purpose. Gardening for her is more than the simple round of maintenance, it is an expression of her vision and at Bolobek she has pursued this vision.

Speaking of her early love of gardens, she recalls a holiday in England before the Second World War, rambling through the primrose-carpeted woods in Hampshire and adds 'I knew then the sort of garden I wanted'. She also remembers meeting Edna Walling when the formidable jodhpurred designer was at work on an area of her mother's garden and reflects on how sad it is that Walling did not live to see her own renaissance. But it is something else that gave Joan Law-Smith her vision of the gardens she would make and this she describes as her 'origins', a sort of inherited ideal and one which she feels was instinctive. As a writer herself she pays tribute to the influences of Gertrude Jekyll, Russell Page and others but however profound and lasting these influences have been 'they have not led to slavish copying'.

Bolobek is the second garden that the Law-Smiths have shaped; the first, Koolloomurt in the Western District was 'a battle with the elements, the soil was not good, the water scarce so that many years of hard endeavour were needed to make things grow'. Bolobek is a very different proposition; here the abundant water supply and inherited 'bones' have enabled her to create the garden we know today. When talking of Bolobek she expresses gratitude for the twenty years of happiness and satisfaction it has given them. And like other gardeners she bemoans her mistakes: 'one lifetime is not enough, I feel I need another to correct all the mistakes'.

Neil Robertson



Joan Law-Smith in her garden at Bolobek

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

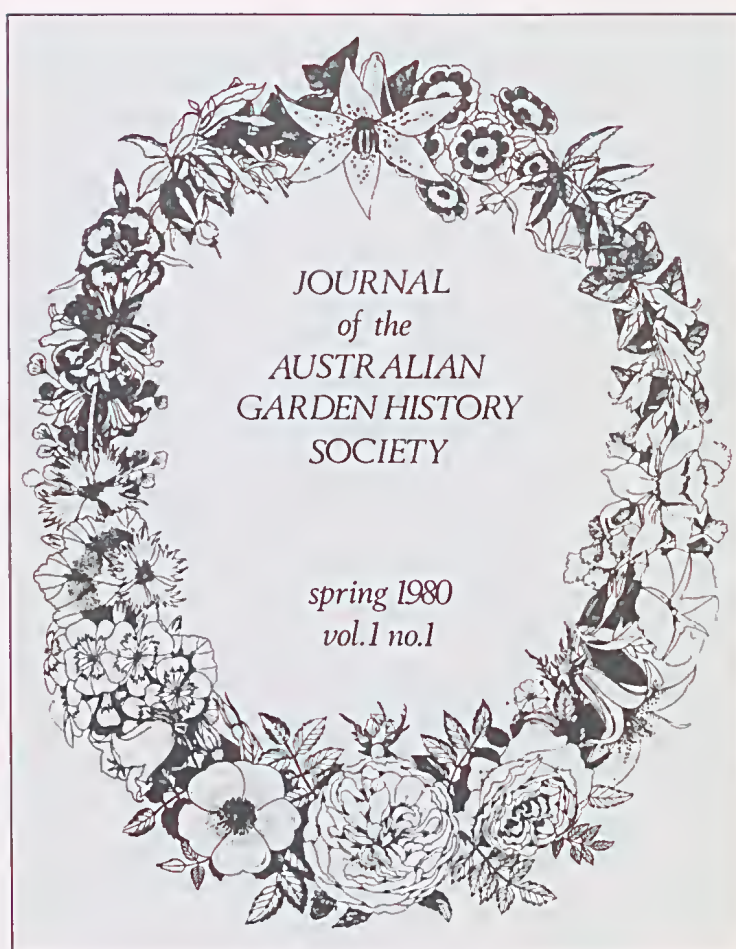
Reflections on the decade 1980–1990

In 1965 an association known only as the Garden History Society started in England; its impressive standards in publication, research and public work have made it influential in the cause of historic gardens. It was not until thirteen years later, in 1978, that such a society was proposed here, to study the 180 years of gardens in Australia and their significance and conservation. At this time there was a revival of interest in the architectural and landscape heritage, both here and overseas. In London, the Victoria and Albert Museum was preparing its great exhibition on 1000 years of British gardening. At the annual conference of the GHS at Lancaster, Professor William Stearn was arousing interest in plant species with his superb lecture on Japanese plants. I heard him there, corresponded, and he later came as a speaker to a Tasmanian conference of the AGHS. Thus a link was established with the English GHS, and Ted Fawcett too came out to an early AGHS conference.

Australia was showing its interest in the new garden history movement both with an Australia ICOMOS conference at Beechworth in 1976 and by the efforts of the Australian Heritage Commission to organise state surveys of historic gardens. This culminated in the AHC calling a co-ordinating meeting of state research representatives in June 1978 at Ripponlea and it was here, as far as I know, that the first idea of an Australian Garden History Society was mooted. Peter Watts chaired the meeting and others attending included Professor Carrick Chambers, Richard Jones, M. Tooby, Tony Whitehill and Phyl Simons. Peter recalls that after lunch we were sitting in the bay window at Ripponlea discussing the project. I mentioned experience as a member of the English GHS and suggested a society for garden history would make a logical extension to the heritage work. Be that as it may, the energy and enthusiasm of Peter Watts developed the idea. Later he sent details of a four day programme for an initial meeting, suggested speakers and, fresh back from a GHS summer school in Oxford, stressed the importance of a good location. Later Peter also sent a profile of a possible society for inclusion in the catalogue of *The Art of Gardening in Colonial Australia* after an approach by the Australian Gallery Directors Council.

These efforts led to the support of the Australian Heritage Commission and National Trusts, and Miranda Morris and I were asked to organise a meeting in Launceston in April 1979 to consider the proposals for a garden history society. Interested parties met and several gardens of the great Midlands properties were opened and a picnic lunch held at Woolmers. The wrath of one landowner was incurred, however, because we had not re-confirmed our visit; a lesson for future occasions. As a result of the meeting it was determined to go ahead with plans for a garden history society. The first newsletter, with its periwinkle border, was produced by Miranda Morris in September that year. It contained the proposal for a society by Peter Watts, names of interested people, research activities and an article on Tasmanian gardens.

The first garden history conference was arranged with



Floral wreath drawn by Joan Law-Smith for the first AGHS journal

the aid of the National Trust and an interim committee, led by the first AGHS president, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch. It was held at Melbourne in March 1980. The talk by Oline Richards on the Western Australian goldfield gardens remains in my memory and set a healthy guide away from the elitist idea that only large gardens were important. Dame Elisabeth was an effective and enthusiastic president and in one letter enjoined members to follow the aims of the AGHS, in discovery of historic gardens, in their educative role and in the assistance to owners with maintenance difficulties. Affiliation with the Australian Council of National Trusts was sought and a quarterly journal founded, for which Lady Law-Smith designed an attractive wreath for the cover and the expertise of Lady Ebury aided production.

The AGHS secretary, Alethea Russell, reported a rise from 75 member units to 300 in time for the 1981 conference at Mount Wilson in New South Wales. This was a memorable gathering, starting from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney and the site of the First Fleet settlement, and proceeding to the Waterhouse garden Eryldene and up past Rouse Hill, with its ancient araucarias and summerhouse, and along the historic trail to the hill stations of the Blue Mountains, the 'Simla of the South'. As at the previous conference, it was the talk based on original research, in this case Rosemary Polya's on nursery catalogues, which was of particular interest.

By now the society was well and truly established. Today the *raison d'être* of the AGHS must surely remain as the enjoyment, knowledge and preservation of historic gardens. The understanding of gardens in the wider frame of society, place and time, gives heightened appreciation and pleasure in the garden — the embodiment of a civilised society.

Phyl Simons

It is appropriate on this tenth anniversary to look back to the origins of the AGHS. What is probably not widely known is that the Australian Heritage Commission was a key player in the establishment of the society and I can well recall the discussions in Launceston following the AHC Garden History Workshop there in April 1979. On that occasion representatives from around the country had gathered to report on the progress of the various historic garden surveys which were being undertaken at that time, mainly under the auspices of the AHC. The idea of forming a national organisation was endorsed with enthusiasm by all those present. Warren Nicholls from the AHC and Peter Watts, at that time with the National Trust in Victoria, were largely responsible for organising the first very successful garden history conference held in Melbourne in the following year.

My own reflections on involvement over the ten years of the society's existence seem inextricably focussed on Melbourne, where many seminal events occurred. As well as the formation of the AGHS there in March 1980 at the conclusion of that first conference, it was in Melbourne in February 1983, at the time of the terrible bushfires, when Melbourne was a city almost unrecognisable to a visitor in love with its beautiful parks and street tree plantings, that the decision was made to join forces with Tim and Keva North and the *Australian Garden Journal* came into being. This association, the recent setbacks notwithstanding, was significant both for the growth of the AGHS and for the development of a first class journal.

The 1988 conference, this time in flood-bound Melbourne, with its emphasis on the theoretical and philosophical aspects of garden history and conservation, was a stimulating renewal of the spirit which prevailed on the occasion when the AGHS came into being.

Mention should also be made of the work of Chris Betteridge and Howard Tanner in Sydney who were responsible for the society's booklet, *Historic Gardens in Australia*, a useful guide to the conservation of historic gardens which I have used as a reference on numerous occasions when wanting to persuade people in the community of the need for a proper approach to garden conservation.

I have pleasant memories of the visits of two overseas speakers, Professor William Stearn and John Sales, who commenced their nation-wide tours in Western Australia. John Sales' public lecture made a strong impression in Perth and was followed soon after by the successful launching of the WA branch of the AGHS.

During the 1980s the recognition of historic gardens as part of our cultural heritage has become more widely accepted and as we enter the next decade of the society's history we can look forward to consolidating the considerable progress which has been made so far.

Oline Richards

Was there any garden history in Australia before the advent of the Australian Garden History Society? Well of course there were remnants of the work of various Australian garden designers, mostly forgotten except for the very famous. The owners of these gardens, often ignorant of their responsibilities, wondered how to cope with their inheritance.

The precursors of the AGHS include many authors but special mention is due to some key figures: Beatrice Bligh for her book *Cherish the Earth* (1973); Howard Tanner, who as a young architecture student completed his degree at Sydney University in 1969 with a thesis on colonial garden design; Peter Watts, who in 1978 was co-ordinator of the Historic Garden Study for the National Trust in Victoria and also played a key role in the actual formation of the AGHS following his study.

An important prerequisite for such a society was an informed public. After two years of compiling by Howard Tanner and Richard Stringer, the exhibition *The Art of Gardening in Colonial Australia* toured Australian art galleries in 1979. This was a very influential event.

It is significant that since the AGHS began, garden culture has developed at a surprising rate. This was evident at the ninth annual conference of the AGHS held in 1988 at the University of Melbourne, where a large gathering listened appreciatively to serious lectures about history, horticulture, design and management. The society had grown from less than 200 members at its first meeting to a body of informed people approaching 2000. Long may the Australian Garden History Society flourish, to encourage and help owners of significant gardens.

Ralph Neale
Landscape Australia



Cover of Howard Tanner's catalogue, *Converting the Wilderness: The Art of Gardening in Colonial Australia*, which accompanied a touring exhibition throughout Australia during 1979–80

AN EDWARDIAN DISCUSSION

Formal or Natural Gardens for Australia?

On the evening of 30 June 1903, members of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) gathered to hear two papers on garden design to be given by speakers whose concepts of the 'ideal' garden were very different. This difference reflects a perennial debate on garden design but also bears the marks of time and place: the early Edwardian period in Melbourne, a time in which overseas influences were still of major importance but when a new Australian nationalism had affected not only politics but also the arts and architecture.

Walter Richmond Butler, the first speaker, was a member of the Institute's Council. He had been born in England and had trained and worked as an architect there; he had mixed with prominent architects of the day and in the Arts and Crafts circles in which William Morris was a leading figure.¹ In Australia Butler was to become a successful and a fashionable architect.

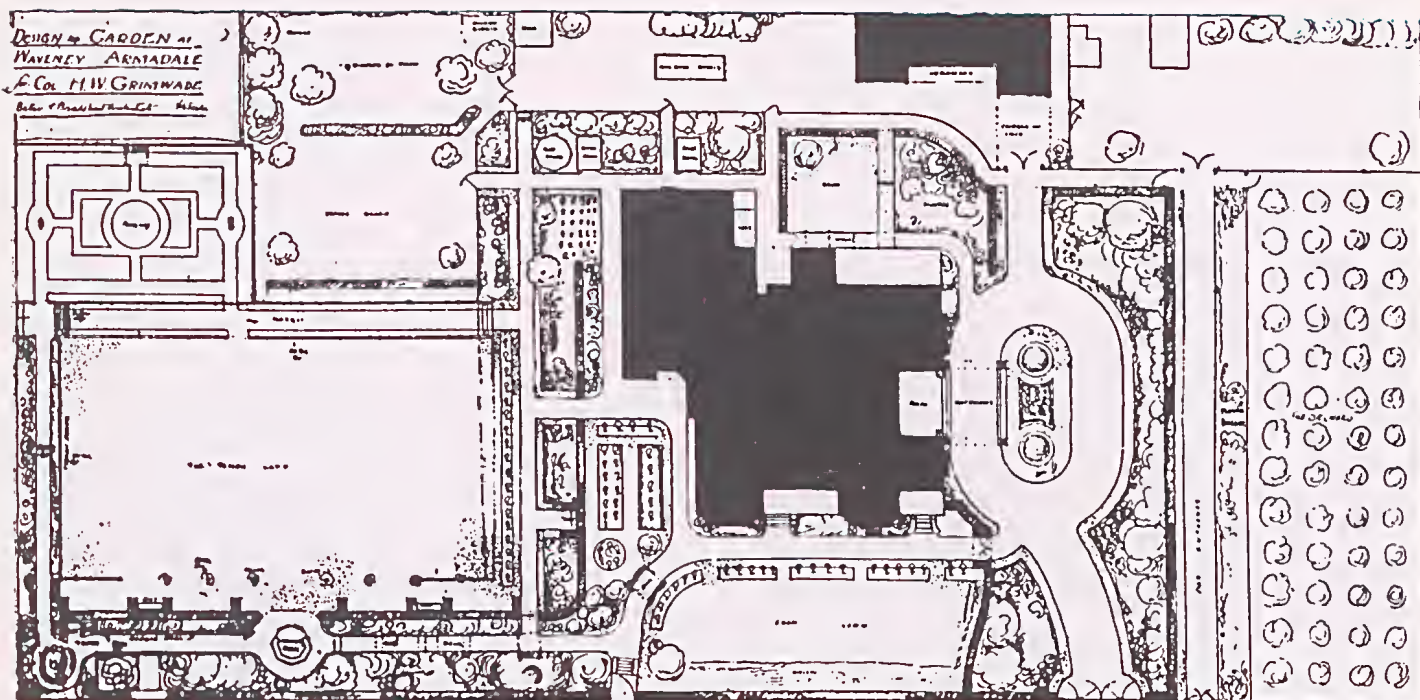
Charles Bogue Luffman, the second speaker, was unfortunately ill that night and did not present his paper until 26 April 1904 (when, in his turn, Butler was absent). 'Of a roving disposition', Luffman had wandered around Spain — and had written a book about his experiences before he went to manage a large orchard at Malaga. In Australia he had worked as an adviser to the orchardists

at Mildura and as a 'peripatetic lecturer on agricultural subjects' in the government service before he was appointed head of the School of Horticulture at the Burnley Gardens.² School and Gardens had both been transformed by him, according to the glowing accounts of his contemporaries.³ As a trainer of gardeners, as the creator at Burnley of 'typical illustrations of the gardens suitable to our climatic and domestic needs'⁴ and as the writer of the book *The Principles of Gardening for Australia*, Luffman was an excellent choice as speaker to the Institute.

Butler's paper was entitled 'Garden Design in Relation to Architecture' and he came quickly to the point: the architect must design the garden.⁵ Why? Butler agreed with the long familiar notion that 'a garden ... is no more a part of nature ... than the house is': like the house it is (or should be) a work of art. What is more, garden and house are one and inseparable, and therefore only the architect would be able to ensure unity between 'the indoor house' and 'the outdoor house'. Yet at the same time Butler described the garden as a 'betweenity' — a cajoling of nature into helping the architect create an introduction from 'primeval wilderness' to 'the complete artificiality of the house'.



The Director's residence at Burnley pictured around the turn of the century. Charles Bogue Luffman's touch is evident in the informal clumped planting and winding paths



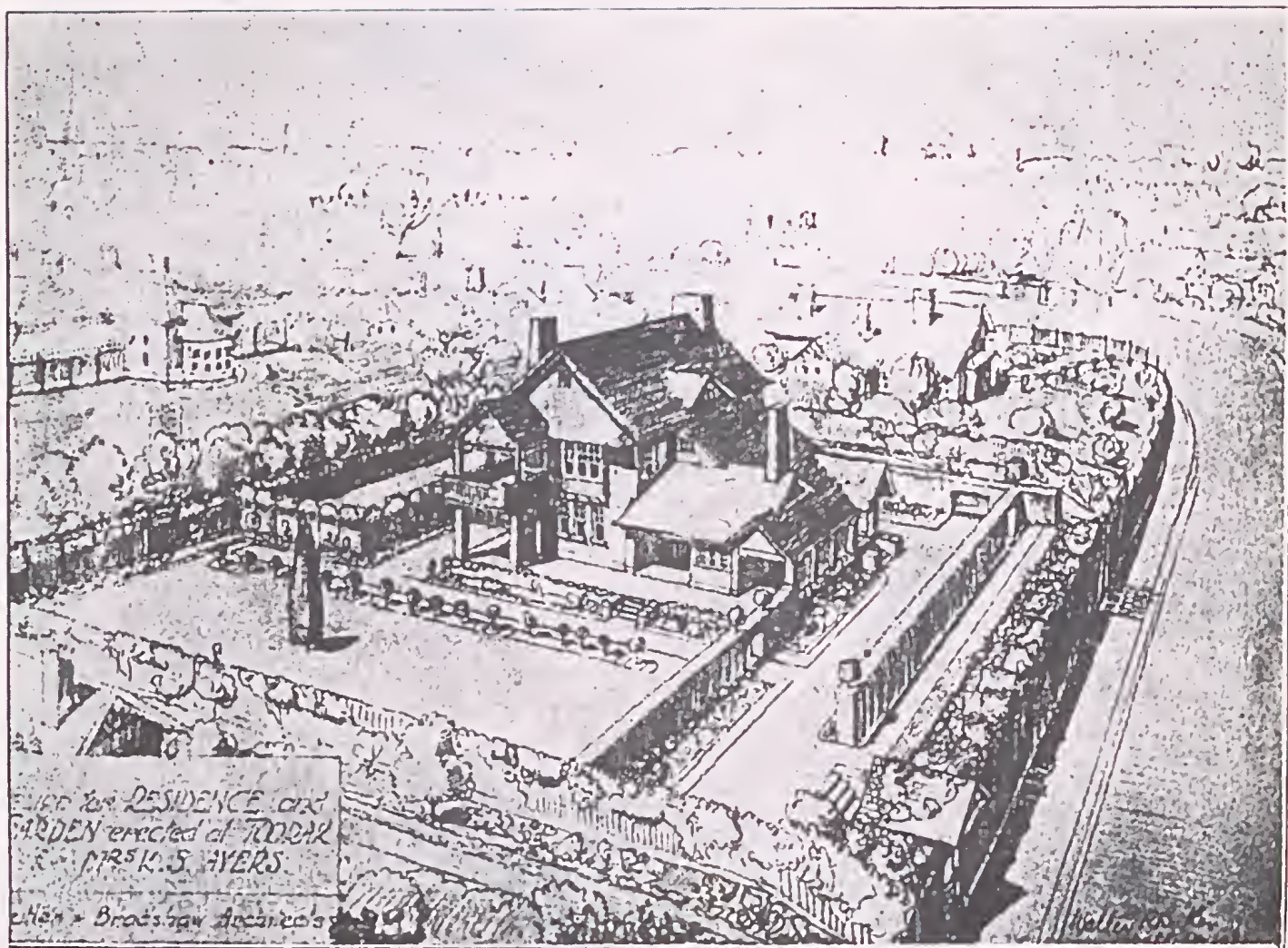
Design by Walter Butler for Colonel H.W. Grimwade's property at Armadale, published in Building, 12 July 1912

In making his garden the architect should work in the same style and materials as those chosen for the house when he designed walls, terraces and other structures. But unity went far beyond this. Unity required a garden of geometrical layout which related to that of the house and a division into separate parts — 'outdoor rooms' — which would be rectangular and 'with the greater formality nearer the house'. Like the house rooms, so the garden rooms provided seclusion. Not for Butler the 'weak and maudlin' efforts of the 'landscape school' which tried to extend the garden into the world of nature beyond.

Butler revealed himself as an enthusiast for a kind of formal garden fashionable in England at that time. This was appropriate, for Butler had worked with J D Sedding⁶ who, with Reginald Blomfield, had imposed a particularly architectural stamp on what is sometimes called the 'old-fashioned garden'.⁷ The 'old-fashioned garden' of the late Victorian period was formal but its advocates rejected many earlier formal styles as over-elaborate and pretentious, as well as the Italianate terracing with its brilliant carpet-bedding of their own time. They looked back to the medieval garden,⁸ the Dutch garden and especially to the English gardens of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries — the 'Queen Anne' period. These were seen as domestic in scale (William Morris recommended the division of garden into 'rooms'),⁸ with a quietness and sweetness in the profusion of 'old-fashioned' flowers (none of the flashy newcomers of Victorian times were admitted) in their setting of trim grass, yew and box. The simplest kinds of the 'old-fashioned' garden, rather than the more architectural versions of it, are exquisitely evoked in the work of the illustrators Kate Greenaway and Walter Crane.

For the most part in his paper Butler seemed simply to be projecting these English ideas onto Australian gardens. Indeed he used an English garden plan to show his audience what he admired: an interesting but undisguised geometrical layout with a clear relationship of garden plan to house plan; the treating of the garden as a series of enclosed spaces, with no attempt to conceal the bounds; the enclosures often hedged; the defining and emphasising of paths and spaces with pergolas and arches; the use of formal walls, steps and terraces of masonry or of grasswork of a formal (geometrical) kind to effect changes in level; the unabashed planting in straight lines of trees and shrubs; the use of topiary (clipping a shrub into the shape of a peacock puts 'a little of the soul of man into it', he thought); the privacy given to the garden by the use of a small entrance court (very English, very un-Australian); the floweriness of the garden contrasting with large, plain, regularly shaped areas of lawn and the even, dark texture of the trimmed hedges. Although he did not use the term 'old-fashioned garden' or refer to 'old-fashioned flowers' in this paper, Butler apparently managed to evoke this atmosphere at Warrawee, one of the several gardens he designed.⁹

Was Butler's paper simply an exercise in nostalgia for the English garden? Some of his audience may have thought so: a couple of them anyway had hoped for a more Australian note. But Butler was not a mere copyist of English style, either in architecture or garden. According to Robin Boyd, he was the first to propose solar planning for houses here (in 1902), 'the first to advocate a northern exposure for all rooms and an eave of calculated width which would shade the glass only in summer'. Up to that time, and rather long after it for that matter, the best aspects for the main rooms were usually thought to be south and east¹⁰ Butler naturally applied



Bird's eye view of Butler's design for Mr and Mrs K.S. Ayers, Toorak, published in Building, 12 July 1912

these new principles in garden as in house design. No large trees should be used in the garden proper, but shade from the west was to be given and some protection from the north where there were flowers — not so high as to exclude the winter sun.

Butler touched on the broader issue of national style, but he did not have a great deal to say about it. This fitted with his view that architecture came first: an Australian garden style could not develop until an *Australian* architecture had emerged. That had not yet happened in his opinion. He had, however, a few remarks to make about the garden style of the future in Australia. He took it for granted, it seems, that it would be 'founded on the English type' but it would

have its own peculiarities arising out of the use of our indigenous ligneous flora — of which we have a goodly number and some of great beauty — and the drier warmer climate in which we may have a wealth of lowers in our gardens that would make any old English gardener green with envy.

But Australian flora was not to be used in any attempt

to imitate nature. Butler was vehement about this: 'It is foolish to think an Australian garden must be wild because the Australian bush is wild! Far the reverse.'

Behind this vehemence lay a point with which Butler had begun his paper: that it is natural for man to extend order into what immediately surrounds him. He had other points to make as well. First, he argued that the contrast between 'a finely kept garden' and wild nature enhances our appreciation of nature itself. Secondly, he referred to what may have been a very widespread response — and may well still be today. By the time he was giving his paper many Australians had come to love the bush, if they had not before, and Butler too appreciated it. His view of it brings out the divided feelings possible, then and now. There are times, he said, of grief or peril when 'the garden is comfortless' and sympathy can only be found in wild nature (although the bush was also nice for holidays, presumably not always times of grief or peril). But while the wild offered pleasure and solace it lacked something.

As you come back again from a lengthened stay on the Snowy River and your eye catches the outline of a clipped and stately hedge, it tells you that you are nearing home; and when you see a shape of ideal beauty cut in that hedge [a peacock perhaps?] it brings to your mind that in the midst of nature there is something that is above it all, and that something is the soul of man.

In the discussion after the paper one man rose to contest this dismissal of wild gardening. This was Arthur Peck (like Butler, a member of the Institute's Council). Peck thought the English garden overdone. He 'knew of a wild spot out of which he felt sure he could evolve a garden' and asserted that he was 'a strong advocate of wilder schemes'. This was too much for Butler. When he at last had the chance to reply he mockingly deplored Peck's views that a garden 'should have nothing in it that a cow would eat ... the notion of a garden with bracken for its choicest growth'. He drew a humorous sketch of Mr Peck sitting under a gum tree with his cow browsing in the garden before him as he soliloquized:

A book of verses underneath the Bough,
A jug of wine, a loaf of Bread, and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness —
Oh Wilderness were Paradise enow.

Unfortunately, my knowledge of Peck's vision of a wild garden stops with this satirical image of a pioneer of a purely Australian native garden, complete with Anglicised exotic Persian poetry. If he did in fact advocate a purely native garden at that time he would surely have been a very rare specimen. The term 'wild garden' was not likely to mean a wild garden of native plants. In fact William Robinson, the great publicist for the 'Wild Garden' in England (his wonderful book on that subject was first published in 1870) pointed away from any exclusive use of native plants. The term, he wrote later, 'is applied essentially to the placing of perfectly hardy exotic plants under conditions where they will thrive without further care'.¹¹ William Guilfoyle became the great propagandist of an Australian variation of that style of wild gardening in a series of articles written just before the turn of the century.¹² In Guilfoyle's view the Australian wild garden should not be an imitation of those made in England. Like Butler, he saw the possibility of much greater horticultural richness here, for 'we can grow not only the hardy plants of the temperate zone, but also the innumerable species which may be classed as sub-tropical'. Australian wild gardens would include not only plants familiar in Great Britain but also a great range of other plants — including bulbs from South Africa, 'to say nothing of the wonderful resources from other countries, our own native vegetation, including the lovely shrubs of New South Wales, Queensland, and West Australia together with that of New Zealand'.¹³

The Australian wild gardens dreamed of and designed by Guilfoyle were composites of plants from everywhere and anywhere — as long as they grew happily and together. Natives were a component only.

To neither Robinson nor his admirer Guilfoyle was the wild garden to be the *whole* garden. The conflict on the theory of garden design in Edwardian Melbourne did not centre on *formal* versus wild garden (let alone a wild garden of native plants only) but on formal versus 'landscape' or 'natural' — terms which might include wild gardening but which were by no means limited to it.

This emerged clearly when Charles Bogue Luffman at last presented his paper to the RVIA.¹⁴ Luffman's paper was by no means a frontal attack on Butler's views. One of his main objects was to build bridges between



Sketch by William Guilfoyle of a wild tropical garden, Villa Pallavicini, near Genoa, published 1897-8

architects and landscape gardeners: he hoped that architects would help in the training of Australian gardeners. He also wanted — in larger gardens — more 'architectural work' such as walls, terraces and summerhouses to be designed by architects. But he also insisted that the properly trained gardener should have a share in design.

Luffman did not reject the formal style out of hand. He believed that the gardener could not stick to one style of garden design: 'architecture, position, natural and financial resources' would determine the choice of style and in some cases a formal garden would be right. But he made no secret of his personal preference for 'those gardens which come nearest the finest expressions of nature'. Furthermore, he thought the 'natural' style was particularly suited to Australia. 'When life was splendid, and every crime a romance', he wrote, 'formal and stately gardens had meaning and value' — as gardens for aristocrats. This might seem to ignore the simpler, smaller formal garden, especially the 'old-fashioned' one. But Luffman made it clear that he liked the 'cottage garden'. What he did not like was the large formal garden being adopted by the wrong people. Where culture and wealth existed such a garden might still be right, but the garden in general was 'now for the democracy. It once implied acres where it now implies feet'. Moreover the garden and its owner were now quite differently placed: 'here in these commercial times, and under hard-wearing skies, we want to reveal Nature first, last and always'. Whereas Butler saw Australians as wanting (in their homes) to escape from primeval nature, Luffman saw them as wanting to escape from their urbanized, industrialized society. 'Hard-wearing skies', however, points to

something more: Luffman's love of nature, as we shall see shortly, was not of undiluted Australian nature.

Not only political and social conditions made the 'natural' garden more fitting than the formal in Australia: the prevailing architectural style also did. It was characterised by 'dark red brick ... with very dark wood gables, strongly marked windows and doorways, and overawing roofs of red tiles giving a sombre and heavy appearance'. Why did this style require a 'natural' garden? Luffman argued that it was a Gothic style and 'Gothic is all vertical lines and graceful curves. In these, as in its minor details, it represents nature ... the natural garden is Gothic, or a thing to be built on perpendicular lines'. There were, however, many variants of the Gothic or natural style, and Australians must find their own: 'A Spanish Gothic house with an English Gothic garden would be in every way unprofitable and ridiculous'.

From his paper and his book a picture emerges of what Luffman saw as an appropriate garden for Australian conditions. He recognised that the finest effects of the landscape style required far more space than the ordinary suburban block and saw that there was an informal, natural style which could 'even in a space 40 feet x 12 feet' give 'the feeling of being in quite a large garden'. Curving paths, lawns as 'winding glades' rather than as broad unbroken expanses, skilful ground shaping combined with suitable plants, planting out of boundaries or the bringing in of 'good material' outside the garden through the use of planting combined with inconspicuous fencing, were all techniques which could be used to this end. 'Natural' also meant that plants were to be given as much freedom as possible; hedges were to be used rarely and clipping was out: 'Humour as much wayward growth as the situation will admit of, and carefully avoid keeping the garden with a young and over-precise face'.

These are principles general to the natural style; more particular points of design arose from consideration of architecture and climate, 'the two great governing factors in all garden schemes'. The red Edwardian house required careful siting:

Such houses want plenty of space on at least two *adjoining* sides. Trees may run close, and practically tower above one side and a part of the back. The view points for such houses should be *angular*, rather than on straight lines. This gives us a fine, sweeping and impressive entrance, and clear ways to view from different points. The interspaces will be richly clothed with heavy masses of trees and shrubs ...

the heaviness of the plant masses counterbalancing the heaviness of the buildings. This could make the garden shady, but that accorded with Luffman's attitude to the Australian climate. Like most others of the time he was concerned more with Melbourne's heat than Melbourne's cold. Ideally the leading garden space was to be towards the east and the south — for the summer garden — with the north and west 'more closely set with high trees and shrubs'. Nevertheless, the 'warmest' side of the house was to be used for a 'winter garden': presumably deciduous plants were to be used. Every garden must have, as well as sun and wind and storm barriers, a

'shade garden, wilderness, or covered shady walk'. The shade garden is described charmingly: it *had* to be a wild garden or (as he called it) a 'wilderness'. Sections of the gardens at Burnley may represent his idea of an Australian shade garden. Luffman also considered as a necessity 'a damp hollow ... to provide sub-aquatics which look cool and fresh in summer', and he liked the idea of tea or garden-houses in such cool spots for the 'best class of house'. This sort of house should also have a water garden, but water was scarce and expensive in Australia. Luffman's ideas for a 'natural' water garden, using surface drainage, are as useful now as then.

Luffman's garden, then, although it was in the 'natural' style, was very much a 'paradise' garden, enclosed against a 'violent' climate. He not only disliked the heat of summer, but also found little pleasure in most Australian landscape (perhaps Butler found more!). Luffman wrote:

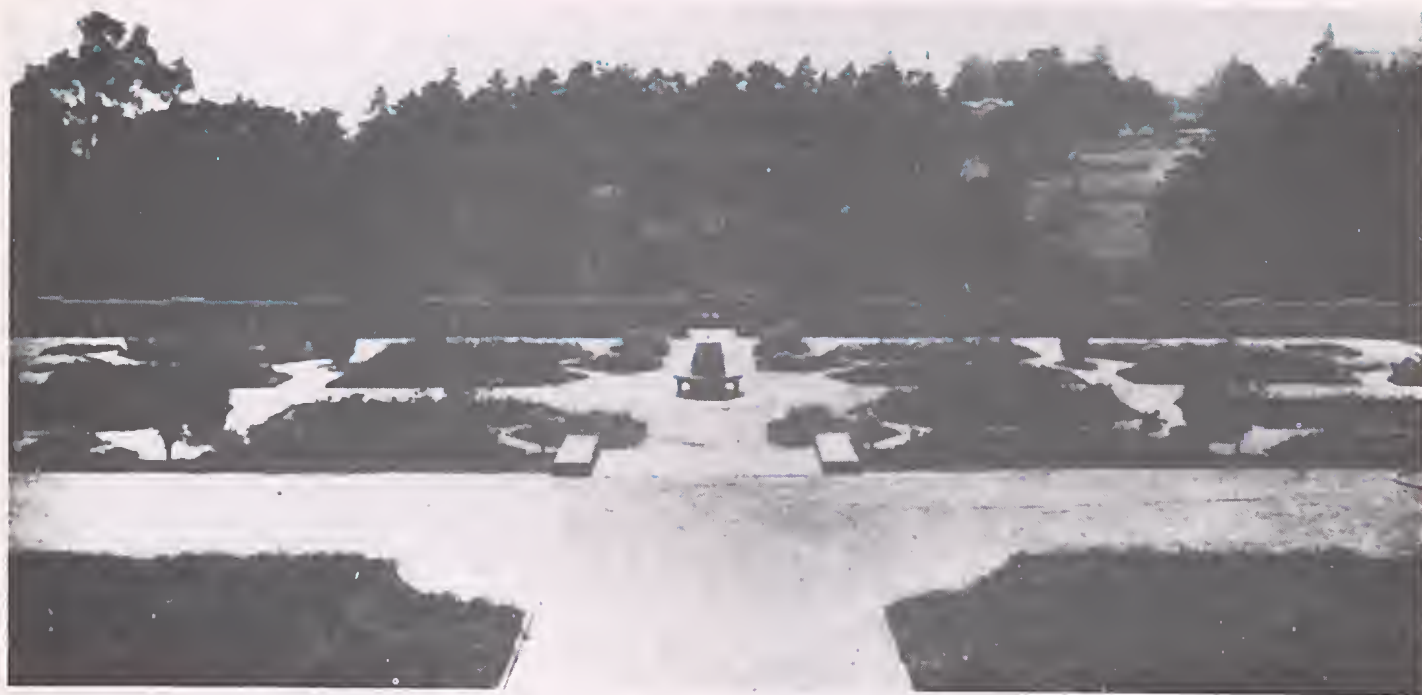
We suffer here from lack of fine natural shapes and graceful combinations in nature. There is, indeed, little of a soul-stirring and invigorating kind ... the clouds are our only mainstay. Good living landscapes which can be caught and reproduced are extremely rare. We must learn to reverence shade and subdued effects.

There is no enthusiasm either for landscape or native flora. Luffman's main concern was that plants which liked local conditions should be chosen, and this principle would exclude some natives as well as some exotics. Only for the seaside holiday house does he explicitly recommend natives and then not exclusively.

In Luffman's view, then, only a section of the ideal garden — the shade garden — would be wild, although the entire garden would have a free and informal spirit quite different from that of Butler's formal garden; and there is an emphasis on shade and greenery which is not found in Butler's paper. There was, indeed, an opposition between the two styles which was to be reflected later at a much lower level in popular garden literature. Yet it was quite possible to marry the two styles. This



Early plantings at Warrahee, Toorak, showing Butler's formal rosary (Building, 11 June 1910)



Looking over the terrace to the wild garden at Warrawee, pictured in *Building*, 11 June 1910

happened in England when Gertrude Jekyll, disciple of Robinson and a great 'natural' gardener, worked with Edwin Lutyens, the great architect. It looks as if Luffman, with his desire to see a partnership between architect and gardener, appreciated this. And Butler did declare in his paper that there was 'a meeting ground' between the two extremes of the 'formal' and 'landscape' styles. He did not discuss it there, but it was made visible in some of his designs.

There were at least three ways in which the natural style could be wedded with the formal. One was to combine formal design with rich and informal planting. It was demonstrated in the work of Lutyens and Jekyll, but may well have characterised many 'old-fashioned' gardens.¹⁵ Pictures of matured Butler gardens suggest that he probably aimed at such effects. A second way of combining the styles was to have a natural — perhaps a wild — garden outside the formal garden, but in sharp contrast with it. At Warrawee, built only three years after his paper, Butler included a wild garden. From the main terrace the view was of a formal flower garden, enclosed with a balustrade; beyond this existing native trees formed the upper storey of the wild garden which sloped down to a gully which was to be planted with ferns and which was crossed by a rustic bridge.¹⁶ There was a third way in which the styles could be married; since the 'old-fashioned' garden had revived the device of dividing the garden into a series of 'rooms' it became possible to use very different styles in self-contained enclosures. This concept is evident at Warrawee, and also in the garden Butler designed for Clive Baillieu where the wild garden (of fruit trees) was cut off from the rest of the garden by a cypress hedge.¹⁷

In Australia, as in England, the champions in the 'battle of the styles' discovered means of reconciliation.

Marilyn McBriar

- 1 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne, 1979, Vol 7, article on Butler.
- 2 *Australasian*, 25 January 1908. Luffman's account of his wanderings in Spain was published as *A Vagabond in Spain*, London, 1895.
- 3 *Australasian*, 25 January 1908 and James Smith (ed), *The Cyclopaedia of Victoria*, Melbourne, 1903, Vol 1, pp. 278–9.
- 4 *Ibid*, p 279.
- 5 The paper is published in *Royal Victorian Institute of Architects Journal of Proceedings*, Vol 1, July 1903, pp. 78–98. All references to Butler's ideas and of those present at his paper come from this or from the discussion arising from it, *ibid*, pp. 99–103 and its continuation September 1903, p. 116, unless otherwise noted.
- 6 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, loc cit.
- 7 See especially Mark Girouard, *Sweetness and Light: the 'Queen Anne' movement 1860–1900*, Oxford, 1977.
- 8 William Morris, 'Making the Best of It', [circa 1879] in the *Collected Works of William Morris*, New York, 1966, p 87ff.
- 9 *Building*, 11 June, 1910, pp 78–9.
- 10 Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home*, Melbourne, 1952, pp 60, 93.
- 11 William Robinson, *The Wild Garden*, 4th ed, 1894, re-issue by the Scolar Press, London, n.d., preface, dated May 1881, p. xxxviii.
- 12 William Guilfoyle, 'Tourist Notes on the picturesque in gardens, parks and forests', *Bankers' Magazine of Australasia*, 1897–8.
- 13 *Ibid*, Vol x, pp. 367–8.
- 14 C Bogue Luffman, 'Garden Design in Accord with Local Needs' in *RVIA Journal of Proceedings*, Vol 2, pp. 39–50. All references to Luffman's ideas come from this paper, the discussion following it, or from his book *The Principles of Gardening for Australia*, Melbourne, 1903.
- 15 See e.g., Margaret A Paul, 'Old Fashioned Gardening', *Nineteenth Century*, Jan 1980, p 135.
- 16 *Building*, 11 June 1910.
- 17 *Ibid*, 12 July 1912.

EDWARDIAN FLOWERS

While Walter Richmond Butler and Charles Bogue Luffman were presenting their papers on garden design to the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects; continuing, and eventually resolving (at least among themselves) the debate between architects and garden designers begun in England by Reginald Blomfield and William Robinson, Australian gardeners of the day had much to think about besides the professional rivalry emanating from the Old Country.

Whether the natural style was wedded to the formal by combining formal design with rich, informal plantings; or if the union was made by effecting a sharply contrasted division between formalized and naturalistic features, or if the marriage came about as a series of garden 'rooms' each with very different designs and plants, the gardeners of the Edwardian era above all else were preoccupied with growing an enormous variety of plants. Flowers, trees, fruits and vegetable were cultivated with great skill and considerable appreciation. Knowledge of the particular attributes of numerous wild and hybrid forms



Sweet Pea—Cupid. No. 548.

Sweet Pea — Cupid, typical of the engraved illustrations in nursery catalogues of the Edwardian era

Geo. Brunning & Sons'

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE



Season
1903

Plants.

Trees.

Shrubs
&
Florists'
Flowers.

St. Kilda Nurseries,

Brighton Road, St. Kilda.

was widespread and fostered by flourishing horticultural societies, periodicals, flower shows and the nursery trade.

A brief survey of Australian gardening books of the period shows the strength and popularity of gardening as a recreation, and particular information about some of the top flowers of the day. Seed-merchants such as Anderson's, Krempin's and Helmsley's combined trade lists with descriptive and cultural information of a very wide range of plants, publishing them as soft covered books and distributing them through their agents and selling them through bookshops. Specialist nurseries issued extensive lists of roses, dahlias, sweet peas, chrysanthemums, gladiolus, daffodils, carnations and other flowers for cutting and exhibition; while usually very flimsy publications they do, none-the-less, provide ample evidence of a selective and prospering market. Few books venture far into the design of gardens, usually dipping briefly into basic layouts for suburban home gardens and sticking to the safe ground of preparing, construction and planting rather than daring to dive head-long into unknown philosophic waters. Bogue Luffman tried his hand in *Principles of Gardening in Australia* (Book Lovers Library, Melbourne, 1903) and though he had some difficulty in relating to the climate and weather (see Marilyn McBriar's article 'An Edwardian Discussion') he did put forward ideas about how gardens should be designed. Earlier Margaret Maria Browne, alias Mrs Rolf Boldrewood, made a few comments in her book *The Flower Garden in Australia* of 1893 but these were confined to particular garden floral features without any commentary as to how they could be put together to make a garden. Likewise Mrs Arthur Tuckett in *A Year in my Garden* (Melville & Mullen, Melbourne, 1905) is much concerned with the inhabitants of the rose border, shrubbery and flower gardens but presumes that readers would know how they relate to the canna borders, dahlia, camellia, iris and maple beds, and other features of which she writes with an enthusiasm that is somewhat

Nursery catalogues provided the Edwardian gardener with a vast range of varieties for the flower garden

overwhelmed and overwhelming:

Summer is here! Imperious Summer, in dazzling robes of scarlet and gold, with here and there a border of white and fleck of blue. Alas, that these robes would ever become (as they frequently do after a few days of fierce heat and scorching wind) faded and dim!

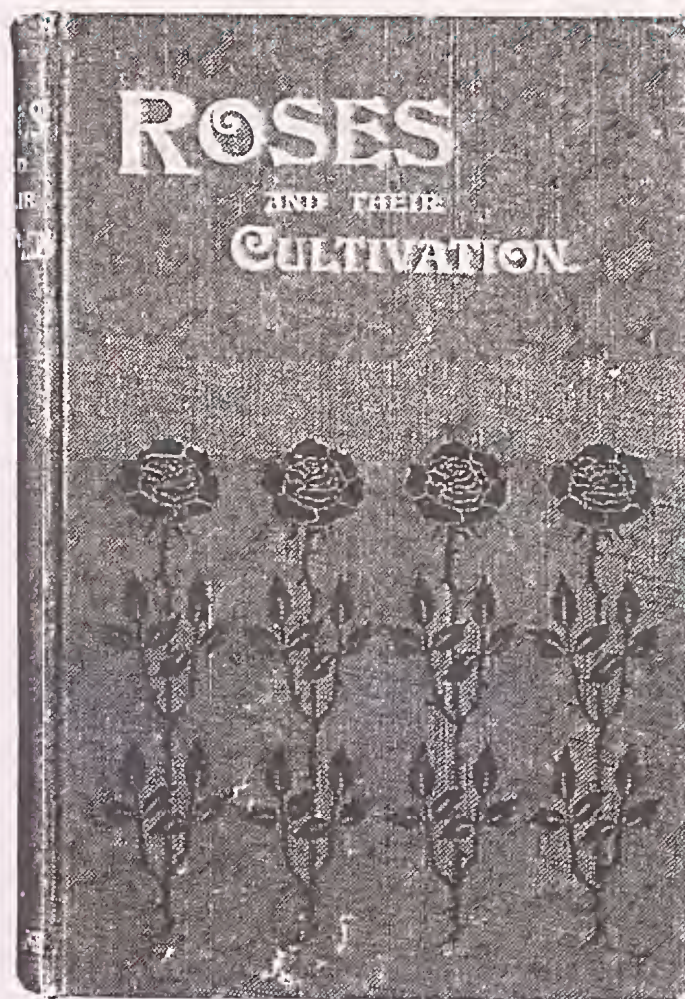
Mrs Tuckett does quote from Gertrude Jekyll's *Wood and Garden* (1899) showing that she not only kept up with the fashionable new ideas coming from the Homeland but also by her choice ('There is always in February some one day, at least, when one smells the distant but surely coming Summer') that she was sensitive to the rhythms a gardener feels.

During the Edwardian era, when the British Empire and British Imperialism were at their height, it is hardly any wonder that Australia — a loyal outpost of the Empire — took as the primary source of gardening information the books and periodicals coming from England. Mrs Tuckett referred directly to Gertrude Jekyll and to William Robinson's *The English Flower Garden and Home Grounds* (8th ed., 1903) but besides these major writers Australian gardeners also had ready access to English authorities on every aspect of flower gardening. Emphasis was particularly strong on the cultivation of every kind of flower that could be grown for cutting and showing. A sample of cheap popular titles gives some idea of the range:

- *The Modern Culture of Sweet Peas* by Thomas Stevenson (1913)
- *Roses and Rose Growing* by Rose Kingsley (1909)
- *The Book of the Rose* by Rev A Foster Melliard (3rd ed., 1904)
- *A book about Roses* by S Reynold Hole (1902)
- *Roses* by H R Darlington (1911)
- *The Book of the Peony* by Mrs Edward Harding (1917)
- *The Virgins Bower — Clematis* by William Robinson (1912)
- *Carnations, Picotees and the Wild and Garden Pinks* by E T Cooke (1905)
- *Pansies, Violas and Violets* by W M Cuthbertson (1912)

There were also many titles on irises, chrysanthemums, asters, lilliums, daffodils, gladiolus and dahlias. Many more flowers were included in more expensive books which featured numerous black and white photographs and watercolour reproductions. Gertrude Jekyll was prominent in the former group, not only for her garden design books but also for works devoted to roses and lilies, and to perennial plants (see *Colour in the Flower Garden*, 1908, re-issued in 1914 as *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*). A prime example of an Edwardian gardening book with coloured illustrations of flowers was *Garden Colour* by four noted gardeners of the day: Mrs C W Earle, Rose Kingsley, the Hon. Vicary Gibbs and the mysterious 'E.V.B.'.

The Edwardian gardener in Australia was not restricted by plant quarantine laws or constrained by the need to conserve plants in their habitats. Plants gathered in the wild steppes of Central Asia and on the hillsides of Asia Minor were imported freely through English and Dutch wholesalers and garden plants from Japan, France, America and Germany were either imported direct or via English trade houses. Nurseries and private individuals



Cover of T.W. Sander's popular book *Roses and their Cultivation*, (3rd ed., 1906)

who had the means brought in whatever plants took their fancy. The botanical cornucopia first tasted by gardeners of the Victorian period continued to pour forth an endless supply of novelties and rarities. Orchids, palms, bouvardias, gardenias, ferns and semi-tropical exotics were available to decorate shade-houses, conservatories and verandahs while hardier perennials, bulbs, climbers, shrubs and annuals were so profuse in variety that the range seems scarcely credible in comparison with the limited lines available in nurseries and garden-centres today.

Many thousands of Edwardian plant cultivars have proven ephemeral; some needing high level horticultural skills to maintain healthy vigorous stocks died out from lack of care and want of knowledge; others proved not amenable to cultivation away from their wilderness homes and were soon exhausted in their habitats by the depredations of plant collectors and bulb diggers; yet others, probably the largest group of all, fell victim to the vagaries of horticultural fashions. The result has been that few Edwardian plants survive in comparison with the range that was available during the period.

One of the most enduring groups has been the roses of the period, particularly the Tea and China roses that came to prominence at that time. In Australia and in California and South Africa, these roses prospered in the mild



Canopy Frames for Weeping Roses. 5ft. 9in. high, 5ft. 6in. diameter 10/6 each complete. Makes a charming arrangement for such favourites as Dorothy Perkins, Queen Alexandra, &c., &c.,

The Victorian fascination with garden structures was continued into the early twentieth century (from Rev. H. Honywood D'Ombraim, Roses for amateurs, 3rd ed., 1908)

An archetypal Edwardian property with neatly detailed picket fence, hedge, shrubbery and of course, room for flower beds

climate and have survived in large numbers. Recent trends in plant conservation and 'heritage gardening' have caused a revival in the popularity of these plants and once again gardeners are enjoying these beautiful and hardy plants. Mrs Tuckett makes an extensive list of which Maman Cochet, White Maman Cochet, Lady Roberts, Kaiserin Auguste Viktoria, Marie Van Houtte, Cloth of Gold, Madame Alfred Carriere, Caroline Testout, Madame Lambard, Belle Siebricht, Dr Grill, Madame Laurette Mesmy, Frau Carl Druschki, Bardou Job, Souvenir de Leonie Viennot, Marechal Niel, Grace Darling, Francois Dubreuil, Perle des Jardins, Safrano, Cecile Brunner, Madame de Watteville, Madame Abel Chatenay and Irish Elegance are easily obtainable today. Many more equally fine varieties could be added to make a rose garden as magnificent as any Edwardian could wish for, though where would we find elegant ladies swathed in long white dresses with leg o'mutton sleeves and wearing broad straw hats to do that most lady-like of Edwardian gardening chores, the dead-heading?

Although much of the floral wealth of the Edwardian era has been lost forever, something of it can be recaptured from the masses of old bulbs and roses that still may be found in gardens surviving more or less untouched from that time. But like the flocks of gardeners that tended them in the gardens of the wealthy nabobs, most of the dahlias, chrysanthemums, gladiolus, sweet peas, carnations and other flowers that filled the garden of the early 1900s only remain, ghost-like, in sepia photographs and faded, delicately tinted watercolours.

Trevor Nottle



Bickleigh-Vale Village Power Lines

I feel very fortunate to have spent the past twelve years as a resident of Bickleigh-Vale Village, the initiative of the late Edna Walling, in Mooroolbark Victoria.

Mooroolbark lies at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges approximately 40 kilometres from Melbourne. It was an area which the young Edna Walling loved for its natural beauty and where, in 1920, she purchased three acres of land on which to build herself a cottage. This event can be seen as the first step in the development of a cluster of cottages and gardens now known as the Bickleigh-Vale Village. Bickleigh-Vale Road and Edna Walling Lane form the nucleus of this 18 acre development which has been classified by the National Trust.

A critical element of the village is the narrow winding laneway along which the cottages have been built. The entrance to the street is framed by a magnificent canopy of foliage which continues along much of its length. Over many years residents have been constantly vigilant in their efforts to preserve this foliage, and have also undertaken regular planting programmes to ensure its continued existence.

The dilemma between maintaining a natural and treed environment and enjoying the conveniences of modern living is highlighted in the problem of maintaining electricity supplies in areas of thick vegetation. Along Bickleigh-Vale Road the narrow carriageway, the dense roadside planting and the tree canopy combine to create a situation in which the pruning around overhead wires has long been a contentious issue.

In 1978 in response to the threat of severe pruning by the State Electricity Commission an alternative to the existing overhead powerlines was first sought. Negotiations took place between residents, the SEC and the National Trust. The cost of undergrounding the lines — then some \$17,000 — was considered prohibitive and a compromise was reached with the installation of a specially insulated conductor at the residents' expense. This cable resulted in less severe pruning and has been a successful short term compromise, although residents are dependent on the co-operation of SEC linesmen to carry out any necessary work sensitively.

The installation of two aesthetically unacceptable concrete SEC poles in March 1988 catalysed a further move to consider placing the power supply underground. The SEC informed residents that not only would these concrete poles remain but that more would be installed whenever replacement of the old wooden poles became necessary.

As a result of enquiries about the concrete poles I learnt of the existence within the SEC of a committee which considers submissions for financial assistance to place power supplies underground in areas of special significance. The submission from Bickleigh-Vale was most favourably received on a \$2 for \$1 basis. The total cost of the undergrounding of the power supply has been quoted at \$24,690.

By happy coincidence, early in 1988 six of the street's residents agreed to participate in Victoria's Garden

Scheme and to hold joint openings of their gardens over the following two years. At the first opening in October 1988 over 6,000 people visited the village. It seemed appropriate that funds generated by this and subsequent garden openings should be put towards the powerlines of which one-third of the total cost was still to be met.

The Management Committee of Victoria's Garden Scheme recommended that we make an official submission to them, as profits generated by the scheme are distributed to projects deemed to be significant. Our submission resulted in the funding not only of the undergrounding of the SEC lines, but also of the Telecom cable, as a very generous \$17,500 has been allocated to this project. Without the magnificent support of Victoria's Garden Scheme, as well as a \$2,500 grant from the Shire of Lillydale, the achievement of this important objective may have been a longer and more difficult process.

Future gate takings from Garden Scheme open days will be put towards the preservation of Bickleigh-Vale. Much of this money will assist with expenses associated with connecting individual properties to underground power and Telecom services, so that ultimately all overhead lines in the village will be removed from view.

The enthusiasm and generosity of the bodies which have supported this project are a measure of the esteem in which this area is held, and a fitting tribute to the memory of Edna Walling and her work.

Rae Rogers

(The SEC informed us that installation of the underground power lines has been completed and that transfer of power from overhead to underground source will be effected by the end of May. Editors)

Care and Upkeep of Gardens of Special and Historic Interest

The Centre for the Conservation of Historic Parks and Gardens at the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York, is running a short course about *The Care and Upkeep of Gardens of Special and Historic Interest* in conjunction with Askham Bryan College and the Professional Gardeners' Guild. This course will be held at Askham Bryan, York from 2-7 September 1990. Closing date for applications is Friday 17 August. Course fee, including visits and entry charges is £200. Full accommodation including meals at Askham Bryan College for the duration of the course is £120.

Applications and enquiries should be addressed to:

The Secretary

Centre for the Conservation of Historic Parks and Gardens

IoAAS, University of York

The King's Manor

York YO1 2EP

Ph. York (0904) 433 966

Japanese Flowering Cherries (*Prunus* Sato-Zakura) by Robert Cross and Michael Looker (Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, \$7.50 — available from Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens at the RBG Kiosk and selected outlets)

This is the first of what is planned to be a series of occasional publications on groups of ornamental plants, aimed at providing information for both professional and amateur on culture, classification, diversity, nomenclature, history and conservation.

There are many varieties of Japanese flowering cherries; as so often happens with such groups of species and hybrids, their nomenclature has over the years become confused, partially from carelessness in naming within the horticultural industry and occasionally by deliberate sabotage of a legitimate name unofficially judged as most likely to stimulate the promotion of a variety and partly from genuine misunderstanding and misidentification.

In this publication these flowering cherries are each characterised and the authentic name applied (almost certainly for the first time in Australia). Unfortunately the volume confines itself only to those known to be in cultivation in the state of Victoria. One can only regret that the authors have confined themselves to such limits. After all customs barriers at state boundaries disappeared at Federation. One would have much more confidence in using the names and descriptions if the work covered this small but beautiful group of plants for south eastern Australia, or even better, for Australia.

The Japanese flowering cherries *Prunus* Sato-zakura are amongst our most beautiful flowering shrubs and trees and this work clearly and simply describes and illustrates in colour the cultivars, documents their requirements for cultivation and provides a key to the species presently known to be grown in Victoria. The printing is clear and the production of this 34 page booklet is of high quality with good colour printing of photographs of the flowers and some earlier technical drawings. These are clear black and white diagrams of inflorescence and leaf characters. There is also a helpful habit sketch of the typical form and branching habit of each cultivar. Also included is a plate of the most relevant colours from the Royal Horticultural Society's colour chart a most useful addition. Every nursery handling these plants should check their naming and this no doubt will also be the desire of many practical gardeners. I certainly look forward to next spring when I can put this work to the full test.

Professor Carrick Chambers

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NATIONAL NEWS

New national office

The AGHS has now settled in to the new national office within the old Melbourne Observatory site. The premises are not, as one Tasmanian correspondent supposed, the erstwhile quarters of the *Government Astrologer*; but in fact the former residence of the *Government Astronomer*. We plan to feature the history of the Astronomer's garden and grounds in a forthcoming issue of *Australian Garden History*. (In future, all letters addressed to 'Astrology House' will be returned to the sender!)

Report of National Management Committee meeting

The National Management Committee met in Melbourne on 27 February 1990. Key issues discussed included:

- new Melbourne premises at the former Astronomer's residence, adjacent to the Royal Botanic Gardens
- all membership renewals generally fall due at the end of June: these will to be subject of a separate mailing in late May 1990, in conjunction with brochure and application form for October conference
- all branch minutes to list key correspondence in future: copies of minutes to be sent to Melbourne office and also to Howard Tanner, Secretary, AGHS, 52 Albion Street, Surry Hills, New South Wales, 2010
- distribution of information from National Management Committee meetings to be the responsibility of branch representatives
- New Zealand garden tour: potential and appropriate timing being explored
- programme of branch events for remainder of 1990 discussed: details included in the Calendar of Events in this journal
- financial situation is still lean: advertising to be sought for the journal
- editorial content of journal discussed: a balance between historic and modern gardens and gardening issues was considered appropriate.

Howard Tanner

Annual Conference

The AGHS Annual Conference is to be held at Albury this year. Residential accommodation will be at the Lake Hume resort with visits to gardens in Victoria's north-east. A brochure with full details will be mailed to all members late in May 1990. The theme of the conference, 'Australian plants in the designed landscape', will be explored through garden visits and a series of talks. Jim Willis will talk on 'The discovery of Australian plants', Richard Barley will review the availability of Australian plants during the nineteenth century and John Foster will discuss the popularity of native plants in our gardens. Other speakers will include John Patrick, Rodger Elliot, Sue Campbell and Juliet Ramsay. On the final day, following the Annual General Meeting, we will have lunch in the Albury Botanic Gardens and a guided tour of the gardens. The talks will take place on Friday, 12 October 1990 and will be followed by a barbeque dinner. The garden visits will be on Saturday, 13 October and the Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, 14 October 1990.

Office help wanted

With the move of the national office to Melbourne, volunteers are required to maintain membership records and carry out general office duties. Can you spare a few hours each week to work in the pleasant environment of the office, located adjacent to the Royal Botanic Gardens? If you cannot volunteer on a regular basis would you be prepared to be included on a back-up list to help out on an occasional basis? Please consider this request and ring Helen Page on 397 2260 (home) or 666 5395 (business) to discuss any assistance you may be able to provide.

STATE NEWS

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS/SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH

New committee and office bearers

New committee members and office bearers have been elected to organise the activities of this branch. New chairman is Michael Bligh with Libby Webster and Katie Gay as assistants, Janet Payne as treasurer, Helen Andersson as secretary and Chris Rowlands, Dorothy Sears and Kelly Wright as committee members. Several important events are planned by this branch for later in the year; details are included in the Calendar of Events in this journal.

Peggy Muntz lecture

On Friday 30 March 1990 a lecture entitled 'Influences on the development of American gardens' held at Mt Broughton, Sutton Forest attracted an audience of around fifty-five members and friends of the Southern Highlands/Southern NSW Branch. The lecture by Mrs Peggy Muntz, a lecturer at the Ryde School of Horticulture, traced the history and settlement of the United States of America and how these factors have influenced the development of American gardens.

Helen Andersson

TASMANIAN BRANCH

Plant Fair, 19 November 1989

What a wonderful success our plant fair was again this year! Due to the kindness of Mr and Mrs G. Taylor of Ellesmere, Jericho, we had a perfect garden setting for such an event. The day was fine and cool — just right for the plants, and also for the trade table with its cakes, garden implements and other treasures. To facilitate the handling of the many and varied plants we had several tables, each with a set-priced item on it. This was necessary to cope with the hundreds of pots brought in by so many of our members, who had obviously heeded the call not to 'haul out plants on the last day' but had potted merrily on throughout the year from their gardens. All plants were in demand but none more so than one gorgeous peony that somehow was sold twice in transit

from donor to table. It would be a big help if members with a special treasure that may not be recognised by the pricing committee could put on a price tag to indicate its importance! The Ellesmere garden was a delight, and much appreciated by those sitting at tables having refreshments provided by the Uniting Church, Oatlands. Our profit for the day was a mighty \$2900, a marvellous effort and already committed to local branch projects. Thank you members and helpers. This day is now an assured biennial event.

Anne Downie

Weekend tour, 17–18 February 1990

What a lovely weekend this one proved to be with our first treat being the garden of Mr and Mrs Dennis Morris in the foothills of Mount Wellington. A beautiful setting, with many varied plants and shrubs growing well in the colder climate. In particular a large planting of heaths look particularly pretty and colourful. This established garden was born in 1967 and through sheer hard work and enthusiasm has become a most wonderful garden. Having visited this garden previously in late spring and seeing it now in late summer makes you wish to visit it in every season. The next garden we visited belonged to Mrs Rylands. This enchanting garden has many species of alpine and many, many ground cover plants, all looking perfect in their quite peaceful setting directly below Mount Wellington. The drizzling rain could not dampen the enthusiasm of the garden lovers and decked in the numerous coats supplied by our generous host they ventured to find yet another plant looking nothing less than perfect in its home. A little waterfall trickled down through a rockery containing all sorts of treasures, completing this lovely garden. Our next stop was a picnic lunch in the Cascade public gardens under the protection of some lovely old trees which were very welcome as rain still persisted. After lunch we proceeded to the Woodstock gardens owned by the Cascade Brewery and met up with the tour guide and the head gardener, Rosemary Keane. The history of the gardens was most interesting and Rosemary's plans for the garden were also good to hear. This enjoyable tour was completed by a video session on the history of the Cascade Brewery itself together with a very enjoyable Cascade cider!

Sunday found us motoring to Mrs Jan Francome's garden at Ranelagh in the pretty Huon Valley. The sun shone while we enjoyed a leisurely stroll around this beautiful and much-loved garden. The variety of plants was too numerous to mention but the dahlias were looking at their colourful best. Jan's garden provided a true contrast to the colder climate of the gardens we visited on Saturday. We are very fortunate to be able to view and enjoy the many lovely gardens that have generously been opened to our members and a simple thank-you hardly seems sufficient for the privilege of enjoying the private gardens that are obviously showered with much love and many, many hours of hard work prior to our visits.

Sandra Herring

VICTORIAN BRANCH

Visit to Willsmere, 22 February 1990

About seventy members shared wine and cheese at twilight, and the experience of walking and bike-riding through the grounds of Willsmere, the former Kew Asylum. This magnificent building has dominated the Melbourne skyline looking northeast from the city since the 1870s. Chateau-like, it sits high on a hill top above the river Yarra, towering over its woodland surroundings.

Not many of us had been to Willsmere before. Close up, it is a strange mixture. Forbidding external grandeur contrasts with internal austerity — hospital wards of bygone days. But its several courtyards have a comforting elegance. The architectural symmetry of original buildings extends to privies and garden walks, echoed in remnants of early plantings — cedars, araucarias, oaks, planes, arbutus and more. The main buildings are on two levels connected by unusual sloping verandahs. They, and bluestone stairways, retaining walls, terraces and elaborate brick walling show the flair with which solutions were found to problems of this sloping site.

Conservation architect, Nigel Lewis, spoke to us about Willsmere's past, and its uncertain future. Tenders are being called for 'developmental' proposals. The AGHS and others who care have endeavoured to ensure that the significant character of the property be retained. But some areas of the estate have already been subdivided. Parts of the parkland will be retained, much will go.

Lorrie Lawrence

Gippsland tour

On 24–25 March twenty three AGHS members took part in the tour of Gippsland and some local friends joined our bus on each of the perfect days. We visited Strathfieldsaye at Perry Bridge, on the northwest shores of Lake Wellington, and then went to the city of Sale where David Crouch, of the Sale Parks and Gardens Department pointed out the vestiges of the former botanical gardens, best seen as a profile of araucarias, bunya pines and other notable mature trees against the skyline and now absorbed by a golfcourse, small zoo and bowling club. David Crouch addressed us on the steps of the restored rotunda in Victoria Park. We noted the ad hoc tree planting of the 1930s, enjoyed the shade and the formal rose garden planted to the pattern of the Crouch linoleum.

Boisdale Homestead (1882) near Maffra was next. The spacious single storey house of brick made on the property is built in a wide V which looks from a verandah and wide gravel driveway over sloping lawns where an interesting collection of trees and shrubs has been planted so as not to impede the panoramic view of the valley of the Avon river, and beyond to the mountains. Then to Penpol Cottage, once part of Boisdale cattle run, where Mrs S T Pearce picks apples from the tree 'Deinette du Canada' imported 100 years ago, and includes the Tea Rose 'General Gallieni' (1899) and 'Chateau au Clos Vouget' (1908) in her plantings.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

In Maffra we briefly saw Duart with views to the mountains and sweeping lawns, and the cottage Utingi featured in Peter Watt's book *Historic Gardens of Victoria*. The next day to Bon Accord in Sale. This garden, established in 1860, provides an English character to a fine Victorian house. There are handsome trees and shrubberies and a conifer garden. The layout is little changed from the original.

At the Holey Plain, Mr and Mrs Edward Crooke had lunch organised in the ample shade of their large canopied trees. Here the trees, shrubs and underplanting were admirably labelled, and Mrs Crooke had made available original plant lists, dockets and receipts for the plantings of the garden at the end of the last century.

Finally we were at Dunedin, the home portrayed in Jean Galbraith's *Garden in a Valley*. Here she graciously received us. She also shared with us her room with the view, from which she has written her books and the articles for our delight. Privileged indeed, we enjoyed our visit to each and every garden.

Joan Shelton

Financial assistance

Since December last the Victorian Branch has made a donation of \$2000 to the National Management Committee, profits from branch activities. In addition the branch has also underwritten the cost of issues 4 and 5 of *Australian Garden History* (\$4170). This assistance totals \$6170 for which the National Management Committee is most appreciative.

Jean Williams
Treasurer

The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history — horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in a wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

The editorial content of articles, or the products and services advertised in this journal, do not necessarily imply their endorsement by the Australian Garden History Society.

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To make a booking for any of the events listed in this calendar fill out one of the Activity Booking Forms included in the journal and forward it with your remittance to the relevant branch unless otherwise indicated.

JUNE 1990

Victorian Branch

- Thursday 7 June
Illustrated talk by John Hawker on his recent study tour of England and Italy as holder of a Churchill Fellowship.
Time: 7.30 pm
Location: Herbarium Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra
Cost: \$4.00 members, \$6.00 non-members
Information: Diana Renou (03) 417 3734

South Australian Branch

- Saturday 9 June
Working bee at the maze in the Belair Recreation Park. Work to be done includes pruning and hand pulling of young boneseed seedlings.
Information: Trevor Nottle (08) 339 4210 AH

Tasmanian Branch

- Wednesday 20 June
Soup and Sandwich Day (North). Jenny Prevost to host a Book Day at Powranna. Marg Roberts will present a selection of gardening books from the State Library.
Time: 11.30 am
Location: Powranna, Perth
Cost: \$5.00
Information: Jenny Prevost (003) 986 252
- Saturday 23 June
Soup and Sandwich Day (South). Anne Downie to host a slide talk by Dr Jo Carter featuring gardens visited on her recent UK trip.
Time: 11.30 am
Location: Dungrove, Bothwell
Cost: \$5.00
Information: Anne Downie (002) 59 6155

ACT/Monaro/Riverina Branch

- Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 June
Mid-winter seminar 'Gardens in Arid Areas' to discuss issues about gardening in hot climates and visit some local gardens.
Location: Hay, western NSW

JULY 1990

Tasmanian Branch

- Seminars in Hobart and Launceston.
Information: (South) Laurie Miller
(North) David Roberts

Sydney and Northern NSW Branch

- Tuesday 10 July
Talk by Mrs Helen Proudfoot on her recently published book *Gardens in Bloom: Jocelyn Brown and her Sydney Gardens of the '30s and '40s*. This book has been widely reviewed in various magazines and

journals and an article based on this book appeared in the Oct/Nov 1989 issue of this journal. Refreshments will be served.

Time: 6.00 pm

Location: Meeting Room, State Library, Macquarie Street

Cost: \$8.00 members, \$9.00 non-members

Tickets/Information: Robin Lewarne, 60a Shell Cove Road, Neutral Bay, 2089 with stamped self-addressed envelope (02) 953 1916

Southern Highlands/Southern NSW Branch

- Sunday 15 July

Luncheon with Mr and Mrs Claude Crowe at historic Kerever Park. A unique opportunity to be part of garden history when Mr and Mrs Crowe give an informal talk on some of the gardens they have planted. The gardens at Kerever Park boast some of the oldest trees in the Southern Highlands.

Booking slip to be sent to branch secretary.

Time: 1.00 pm

Location: Kerever Park, Riversdale Avenue, Burradoo

Cost: \$15.00 members, \$18.00 non-members

Information: Janet Payne (048) 61 3271

Sydney and Northern NSW Branch

- Sunday 29 July

North Shore camellia day. Cec Blumenthal, President of the Camellia Research Society — NSW Foundation, will talk on the history and various species of camellias. Two gardens with specialised camellia collections will be visited. Meet 12 noon for picnic lunch at Eryldene, Gordon.

Cost: \$10 members, \$12.50 non-members

AUGUST 1990

ACT/Monaro/Riverina Branch

- Visit to arboreta in the ACT.

West Australian Branch

- Sunday 5 August

Seminar: Recording and Restoring Old Gardens

Tasmanian Branch

- Sunday 19 August

Annual General Meeting, Hobart. Guest speaker is Mr Brian Lamb who is currently restoring Government House garden.

Time: 2.00 pm

Location: Southern Teachers' Centre, Edward Street, Glebe

Information: Joanna Foulds

South Australian Branch

- Wednesday 22 August

Annual General Meeting and Dinner.

Time: 6.30 pm

Location: Cummins Historic House, Sheoak Avenue, Novar Gardens

Cost: \$25.00 — drinks not included (BYO)

Victorian Branch

- Wednesday 29 August

Annual General Meeting. Guest speaker is Anne Latreille.

Time: 8.00 pm

Location: Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra

Cost: Free

SEPTEMBER 1990

ACT/Monaro/Riverina Branch

- Saturday 1 September

Annual General Meeting. Richard Ratcliffe to speak on Garden History in England and Europe.

Location: National Botanic Gardens, Canberra

Southern Highlands/Southern NSW Branch

- Sunday 2 or 8 September (date to be finalised)

Garden Day visiting gardens on the Gib at Mittagong. Details will be sent to branch members.

Information: Dorothy Sears (048) 83 4324

West Australian Branch

- Tuesday 11 September

Annual General Meeting with guest speaker.

Victorian Branch

- Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 September

Conservation of Garden Structures Seminar. Speakers include Richard Aitken, Allan Willingham, Nigel Lewis, James Charlwood and others. Site visits to Dalvui, Titanga, Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Talindert.

Location: VCAH — Glenormiston, Noorat via Terang

Cost: \$110 members, \$140 non-members, \$25 accommodation (Saturday evening)

Information: John Hawker B (03) 650 9424

H (03) 51 5012. (Registration form, available from John Hawker, must accompany payment.)

Tasmanian Branch

- Saturday 22 September

Seminar — Containerized Gardening and Stone Trough Making. Limit 30.

Time: 11.00 am

Cost and venue to be advised

- Information: Laurie Miller

Sydney and Northern NSW Branch

- Late September

Edgecliff and Woollahra garden viewing day. Details later.

OCTOBER 1990

National Management Committee

- Friday 12, Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 October

Australian Garden History Society Tenth Annual Conference.

Details included in National News.

The calendar of events has two purposes: one is to inform members of activities in their local area, the other is to make ALL members aware of activities organized by the Society.

Branch activities are not restricted to members of that branch; all members are invited to participate. You may be able to arrange your holidays or a visit to another state to coincide with AGHS activities. A warm welcome and an interesting experience awaits you.